

## NIGHTGUARD WEAR & CARE

Congratulations! You've received your custom-made acrylic splint today. We'd like to give you some information that will answer in advance the questions that usually come up when you first start wearing your splint.

### HOW OFTEN DO I WEAR THE SPLINT?

If you have an upper splint, you should wear it all the time, except when you're eating or playing active sports. The first few nights you sleep with you splint, you may be aware of it, but within just a few days, you won't notice it any more.

If you have a lower splint, wear it as much as possible, including when you're eating, sleeping and playing sports. The more time you wear the splint, the faster you will get the beneficial results.

### WILL I ALWAYS SOUND LIKE THIS?

The first few days you wear a splint, you'll probably be conscious of lisping and a change in the way you sound when you speak. Practicing tongue-twisters will speed up the natural process by which the muscles of your lips and tongue adjust to your appliance. You'll notice vast improvement over the first few week that you wear your splint. So many people are undergoing TMJ and orthodontic therapy now, you'll probably find that a brief explanation that you are wearing an appliance that will make your bite more comfortable is enough to satisfy those who notice any difference.

### HOW DO I CLEAN IT?

Brush your splint with your toothbrush with toothpaste whenever you brush your teeth. Soaking it in a mixture of white vinegar and water will dissolve calculus build-up; you can also use regular denture cleaning tablets to give your splint a clean, fresh taste.

### WHAT DO I DO WITH IT WHEN I EAT, ESPECIALLY WHEN I EAT OUT?

The acrylic that forms your splint is specially chosen. Since it's meant for the oral environment, it must be kept damp. When not in your mouth, make sure that the splint is soaking, or is wrapped in a piece of dampened paper. At home, select one or two places where you keep your splint when you aren't wearing it. Most people keep a covered container somewhere in the kitchen or bathroom, and slip the splint into it just before sitting down to their meal. This is an excellent time to use the denture cleaning soak.

When dining out, be sure you have your plastic carrying case with you. Wrapping your splint in a napkin is akin to playing Russian roulette... not recommended at all! At the end of a pleasant meal, distracted by conversation and perhaps a glass of wine, the chance of leaving that one crumpled napkin at the table is just too high. Incidentally, write your name, address, and phone number inside the cover of your carrying case immediately.

We can tell you fascinating stories of splints that find their way home in strange ways, but the address information is essential to getting it back.

At home, the two biggest risks are pets and garbage disposals. In the kitchen, make sure your splint isn't close to the sink. Since the splint is your possession, and carries your own scent, a dog will love it, and find it even more delightful for chewing on than slippers. Your splint is strong and well made, but sad experience had taught us that it's not match for dedicated canines.

### HOW LONG WILL I HAVE TO WEAR THIS SPLINT?

The length of time that you'll wear your splint is determined by many factors: the condition of your joint when we start therapy, how many hours you wear the splint each day, the results of your physical therapy, and your own body's rate of healing. Today we'll give you an estimate, and then at subsequent adjustment appointments you'll get information about your progress. In general, the splint is worn for three to four months initially, and then for three to six months after any surgical procedures.

### WHAT IF I LOSE IT?

Each splint is custom molded for you. It takes quite a bit of time for skilled laboratory technician to create the splint, and each time one is made, we start from scratch. So, if you should lose your splint, we will have to remake it, at a cost you of 50% of the initial cost.

Today is an important step in your progress toward improved comfort and function. Please call us with any questions that may arise for you.